

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

As a former television critic in Chicago (at the Chicago Sun-Times) I saw daily proof of A.J. Liebling's maxim that "freedom of the press is limited to those who own one." That is why it is so important--to American freedom of expression and to democracy itself--for the Federal Communications Commission to preserve the ownership rules that prevent the dangerous consolidation of media. It is clear that consolidation of ownership works against diversity of programming and access to the airwaves, which are crucial to a healthy and informed democracy. Although it is true that the public now has access to hundreds of web sites and cable channels, it is also true that much of this programming, whether news or entertainment, comes from just a handful of powerful corporations that set the agenda for public debate on a variety of issues. AOL-Time Warner, for example, is a sprawling conglomerate that controls both the cable companies that wire out homes but also the cartoons our children watch, the music we hear, the news we see and the web sites and magazines we look at. Please vote to preserve the ownership rules as they now exist.